

for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species.

Applicant: Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, IL, PRT-053039

The applicant requests a permit to import ninety-five specimens of mouse lemurs (*Microcebus spp.*) and fifty-seven fat-tailed lemurs (*Cheirogaleus spp.*) removed from wild populations in Madagascar for scientific research.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has information collection approval from OMB through March 31, 2004, OMB Control Number 1018-0093. Federal Agencies may not conduct or sponsor and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a current valid OMB control number.

Dated: March 8, 2002.

Anna Barry,

Senior Permit Biologist, Branch of Permits, Division of Management Authority.

[FR Doc. 02-7989 Filed 4-2-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Emergency Exemption Issuance of Endangered Species Recovery Permit

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of emergency exemption issuance.

SUMMARY: The following applicant has been issued a scientific research permit to conduct certain activities with an endangered species pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 USC 1531 *et seq.*).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Linda Belluomini, Permits Biologist at 503-231-2063.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has been authorized via permit number TE-050644, by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Region, to increase, the area in which it surveys, captures, and handles individuals from the Columbia Basin distinct population segment of the pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*; pygmy rabbit), and to maintain firebreaks located in their habitat in conjunction with research, a captive propagation program, and to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic fire throughout the species range. We issued this permit for the purpose of enhancing the propagation and survival of the

pygmy rabbit. The 30-day public comment period required by the Endangered Species Act (Act) was waived in accordance with section 10(c) of the Act upon a determination that an emergency affecting the health and life of specimens of pygmy rabbit exists, and that no reasonable alternative is available to the applicant.

The pygmy rabbit has undergone dramatic annual declines since 1998, and the entire wild portion of this population now consists of fewer than 50 individuals from just 1 known colony on State land in Douglas County, Washington. As part of a captive breeding program, initiated by the WDFW during the spring of 2001, an additional 14 individuals from this population are being held in captivity, including 5 offspring born at the holding facility. The capture of additional animals from the wild, throughout the species range, will help to ensure genetic diversity of the species by complementing the genetic profiles and potential breeding scenarios of those already in captivity. Any pygmy rabbits that are not considered essential to the captive breeding program will be left in the wild, and ongoing management to protect this portion of the population will continue.

Pygmy rabbits may experience significant mortality due to increased susceptibility to wild fires if fire breaks located within their habitat are not properly maintained. These firebreaks need to be maintained before reproductive behavior is exhibited and especially prior to young of the year being born as early as mid-April.

Delay in the WDFW's planned activities due to the 30-day public comment period could jeopardize the success of the captive breeding program and, ultimately, the long-term security of the pygmy rabbit.

Dated: March 20, 2002.

Rowan W. Gould,

Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

[FR Doc. 02-8021 Filed 4-2-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[Docket No.]

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Northeast Regional Panel Meeting

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice announces meeting of the Aquatic Nuisance

Species (ANS) Task Force Northeast Regional Panel. The meeting topics are identified in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

DATES: The Northeastern Regional Panel will meet from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7, 2002, and 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 8, 2002.

ADDRESSES: The Northeast Regional Panel meeting will be held at the Quality Inn and Suites, 1380 Putney Road, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301. Phone 802-254-8701.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan Snow-Cotter, 617-626-1202 or Sharon Gross, Executive Secretary, Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force at 703-358-2308.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. I), this notice announces meetings of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Northeast Regional Panel. The Task Force was established by the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990.

The Northeast Regional Panel was established on July 25, 2001 to advise and make recommendations to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force on issues relating to the Northeast region of the United States. Geographically, the Northeast region is defined to include the jurisdictions of the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York. The Northeast Regional Panel will discuss several topics at this meeting including: membership of the Panel, updates from the Coastal and Inland subcommittees, updates from the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force and Invasive Species Council on national issues, reauthorization of the National Invasive Species Act, updates on the development of State ANS Plans, findings and management recommendations from the ANS Vector Study, and other topics.

Minutes of the meeting will be maintained by the Executive Secretary, Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, Suite 810, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22203-1622, and will be available for public inspection during regular business hours, Monday through Friday.

Dated: March 27, 2002.

Cathleen I. Short,

Co-chair, Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, Assistant Director—Fisheries & Habitat Conservation.

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